

January 19, 2011

In support of the Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) and the Governor's budget recommendations.

Chairman Roberts and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Dennis Taylor. I represent Children's Disability Services, ~~five~~ ^{six} community based programs that provide services in every county in Montana. Our members include: DEAP in Miles City, Hi-Line Home Programs in Glasgow, STEP in Billings, Quality Life Concepts in Bozeman, Family Outreach in Helena and CDC in Missoula. These regional service providers offer a wide-range of Medicaid funded services to children and their families across the State of Montana.

I appear before you today in support of the Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) budget recommended by the Governor.

Over 318 Montana children are receiving intensive services through the Home and Community-based waivers including the Children's Waiver Service, (CWS) and the Children's Autism Waiver, (CAW).

Children's Disability Services supports Part C, early intervention entitlements for infants, birth to three years of age, and continued funding for the autism waiver. There are currently over 59 children served by the autism waiver who receive these important intensive intervention services.

In addition, we ask the subcommittee to require the department, in collaboration with families and providers, to create a separated Home and Community-based Service for children's services. When Montana submitted it's first Home and Community-based waiver, it was the first waiver in the country and was designed for children with developmental disabilities. That original waiver was started in 1985 while I was administrator of the Developmental Disabilities Division and I am proud that it has proven so successful that now nearly three-fourths of that waiver funds adult services.

Each year when a child grows out of children services, they take with them, on average, \$16,000 a year from the funds available for child and family services to the adult service allocation. While we support the seamless transition to adult services and the continuity of support provided by this practice, we are concerned that the funds for children's services are being eroded year by year. Unfortunately, the need for child and family services continues to grow but the funds to support these services are transitioning to adult services at an increasing pace. Consequently, we urge the creation of a separate waiver for children's services.

This can be done with no additional costs and will better meet the needs of children living in their home with their families. Without a child and family services waiver, we are afraid that the meager funds for children's services will be gobbled up by the adult service system and that the department will not have sufficient funds to backfill children services. Without a children's waiver, we wonder just how long it will be before children's services disappear all together?

Without these important child and family services, many of these children would be in more restrictive and costly placements. Some children currently in foster care receiving these child and family services came from out of state institutions or group homes. Children receiving services make huge gains and many in the autism waiver will not be eligible for services after the three year intervention.

Without the professional and family-based help from our child and family services providers, few Montana families would have the economic resources to meet the needs of their child or children with disabilities.

Please support the Developmental Disabilities Program budget. Thank you for your patience and attention this morning. We hope that the testimony presented by people from all across state will put that human face on the important and necessary services that are funded in the Disabilities Services Division.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our concerns and our support for the Executive Budget.

Children's Disability Services

**A professional association of agencies who provide services to
children with disabilities and their families**

2011 Legislative Session Agenda

Children's Disability Services Providers

Hi-Line Home Programs, Inc., Glasgow
Rick Thompson, Executive Director
rick@hilinehomeprograms.org

DEAP, Miles City
Sylvia Danforth, Executive Director
sdanforth@deapmt.org

STEP Inc., Billings
Erika Willis, Executive Director
erikaw@step-inc.org

Quality Life Concepts, Inc., Great Falls
Merlin Gilham, CEO
MerlinG@qlc-gtf.org

Region IV Family Outreach, Inc., Helena
Sandi Marisdotter, Executive Director
smarisdotter@familyoutreach.org

CDC---Child Development Center, Missoula
Cris Volinkaty, Executive Director
cvolinkaty@childdevcenter.org

Children's Disability Services 2011 Legislative Priorities

- Support Part C Early intervention services expansion.
Early intervention entitlement for infants birth to three.
- Support continued funding for the Autism waiver.
50 children served statewide receiving intensive intervention.
- Support the creation of a separate waiver for children's services.
A program with no additional cost that better meets the needs of children living at home with their families.
- Support a provider rate increase.